

## **Fallston Community Council Meeting Notes September 27, 2011**

Attendees: Dave Williams (Chairman), Don McCreesh, George Twigg, Larry Kreis, Andy Amasia, Joyce Eaton, Jim Riley, Morita Bruce

Guests (and organization represented): Captain Keith Warner (HC Sheriffs Office, Northern Precinct), Jane Walker (County Executive's Office), Denise Lynch (Department of Planning & Zoning), Kirsten Dize (The Aegis), Clayton Solomon

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm by Dave Williams. Minutes from the May and July meetings were approved. Mr. Williams announced that he will be absent for the November meeting and the meeting will be chaired by Mr. Amasia.

### **Information from the County Executive**

Ms. Denise Lynch, Harford County Department of Planning & Zoning described the new volunteer sign removal program which will start October 1st. Volunteers can sign up to remove signs from specific intersections and rights-of-way along state and county roads. Signs on private property are to be left alone and reported to Ms. Lynch, but signs between the road and utility poles (i.e. in the right-of-way) can be removed. There will be a disposal site at Edgely Grove, and Harford County will send letters to the signs' owners telling them what has happened. The program is in parallel with Maryland's nonvolunteer program, which removes signs and imposes fines. Rules for volunteers are being established and coordinated with the Sheriff's Department and Parks & Rec.

Jane Walker provided handouts of the Community Services booklet providing contact information for various service and assistance providers in the county. This is a valuable reference and members were urged to let other community groups know that they are available from her office.

### **Sheriff's Office**

Captain Warner reported that computer problems have made the usual reports unavailable, but that crime overall has declined. He reminded attendees to keep doors, windows, garages and cars locked and valuables out of sight. Home security surveys are available if requested. Bicycles are being stolen so it is recommended that people photograph their bikes and write down serial numbers to help with recovery. They recover a lot of bikes. There have also been many thefts of copper because the price is so high now.

Captain Warner gave the phone number for his Northern Precinct as 410-692-7880 and Captain Swain's Southern Precinct as 410-612-1717 for reporting problems.

### **New Business & Community Updates**

Chief Williams described recent incidents to which the FVFC responded and which involved fatalities. One was a man who tried to cut back a tree by climbing into the tree and using his chain saw; the limb caught on vines and crushed him. Another was a house fire on Preston Drive in which an elderly man with no working smoke detector died. Everyone was reminded of the importance of working smoke detectors on every floor of the house. They are available free from FVFC, and must be replaced (they stop working) after 10 years.

Responding to a question about cell phones and 911 calls, Chief Williams said that the closest cell tower is programmed to notify a specific 911 responder.

A lawnmower parked in a garage before being cooled down is believed responsible for a fire that spread from the garage to a house on Harford Road and Bagley.

Demonstrating the value of smoke alarms, an alarm woke the occupants of a house in Pleasantville which had a hot fire in the ceiling; the occupants escaped without serious injury.

### **Master Plan**

Morita Bruce provided a presentation on the Fallston Community Area portion of the Master Plan, and suggested that FCC inform the Administration what we want for Fallston. Maps and excerpts of the current Fallston plan were discussed, and a list of questions/issues were provided for consideration, along with a more general list of Master Plan issues that affect all communities (such as the ongoing lighting problem).

Topics specific to Fallston included protection of farmland and our rural way of life, traffic problems not being addressed around the Chenoweth Activity Center and the Route 1 area, the need for renovation of areas such as Acme shopping center, and the impact of development on school redistricting and well contamination.

Opportunities for public input are: the draft Master Plan will be issued for public comment by Planning & Zoning, and the County Council will introduce the Administration's final Plan as a Bill and hold a public hearing.

### **Old Business**

Larry Kreis and Andy Amasia said the neighbors had filed a lawsuit against Jones, BG&E and Harford County over the intrusive lighting produced by Jones. Jones has turned off some of the lights but there is still much to work out. The neighbors are upset about the inability of the county to protect their interests. Morita Bruce suggested that excessive light spilling onto other properties is an issue that should be addressed in the Master Plan to protect residents and farmers (some crops and milk cows are adversely affected by bright lights at night). George Twigg observed that Baltimore City's approach for LEED certification for lighting might be a way to provide bright light only where needed, and in an energy-efficient manner.

FCC's next meeting will be in November. The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm.

Submitted by Morita Bruce and Dave Williams